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SOURCE Paris-Dakar.BANK OF FRENCH WEST AFRICA TO LOSE PRIVILEGE OF EMISSION

On 15 December 1952, the French National Assembly voted to eliminate Article 20 [not further identified], which provides for renewing for 20 years the Bank of French West Africa's privilege of monetary emission.

The motion to eliminate the article was made by Andre-Jean Godin, ARS (Action Republicaine et Sociale Action) [an independent group which broke from the French People's Rally], and was passed despite the sharp opposition of Pierre Pflimlin, Minister of Overseas France. Godin remarked that although the privilege of monetary emission in French West Africa and French Togoland granted to the Bank of French West Africa had expired on 29 January 1949, this organization had continued to guarantee the emissions. He emphasized "the illegality of such a method, admissible, perhaps, at a time when our policy with respect to the Overseas Territories was in its infancy, but obsolete today by virtue of the present great scope of our economic effort."

Godin went on to say that he believes that to permit an organization to be simultaneously a bank of emission and a commercial bank is tantamount to a restriction, for its own advantage, of free competition. "Our country, which has been the first to abandon the sterile concept of the colonial pact, must not permit a reversion to the monopolistic control of large companies," continued Godin. He then asked the French government to accept the principle of establishing a public institution of emission.

Joseph Conombo, IOM (Independant d'Outre-Mer, Overseas Independent), from Upper Volta, reminded the assembly that he had sought previously to eliminate Article 20 and thanked Godin for the technical arguments the latter had offered.

Conombo expressed his opposition to having one institution exercise simultaneously the functions of emission and commercial banking operations in the French territories. Such a combination, he said, is no longer admissible, now that France has abandoned a self-interested attitude so as to create a true French Union. He reproached the Bank of French West Africa for what he called its favoritism toward large firms, which control, at their own discretion, the prices of commodities. The National Assembly, he concluded, cannot permit the suppression of the small producers and merchants.

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Jean Silvandre, Socialist from the French Sudan, in turn observed that French West Africa's representatives [in the National Assembly?] and its Grand Council, as well as the Territorial Assembly of the French Sudan, have pronounced themselves in favor of renewing the emission privilege of the Bank of French West Africa.

Minister Pflimlin then voiced his opposition to the motion to eliminate the disputed article, pointing out that the French government proposes not only to regularize the situation, but also to make a structural change. He indicated that a system identical to the one established by Parliament in 1950 for Madagascar would be adopted. The effect of this would be to transform a private bank into a semiofficial company in which the representatives of the government would exercise a preponderant influence.

Felix Tchicaya, UDSR (Union Democratique et Socialiste de la Resistance, Democratic and Socialist Union of the Resistance), from the Middle Congo, supported the minister's viewpoint, indicating that he would vote against the elimination of Article 20. Tchicaya stated: "We have seen the drawbacks of the system used in French Equatorial Africa, which is also different from that which the government proposes today for French West Africa."

Joseph Dumas, MRP (Mouvement Republicain Populaire, Popular Republican Movement), from the Department of the Seine, recalled that in 1949, the Committee on Overseas Territories objected to the system proposed today by the government, and Rene Mayer, Radical Socialist from the Department of Constantine, announced that he rejected the elimination of the article in the name of his group.

The motion to eliminate Article 20 was passed by a vote of 332 to 182.

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